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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4307
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 9823
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 5719
RUEHDJ/AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI 5041
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2553
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 1826
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 2588
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2514
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SUBJECT: KENYA ELECTIONS: COMMONWEALTH OBSERVATION GROUP REPORT
CONCLUSIONS

Ref: Bean-AF/E email of 18 Jan 08

11. On January 17, the Commonwealth Observation Group issued its report on the 2007 Kenyan General Elections. To follow is an excerpt of the report containing the group's conclusions. The complete text of the report is available (ref).

Begin text:

CONCLUSIONS

The December 27 elections with the ninth general elections in independent Kenya and the fourth after the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1992. They were the most competitive in the country's history with a record number of contestants, 2,458 parliamentary candidates and 15,332 civic (council) nominees sponsored by an equally record number of political parties. The 2002 general elections attracted 5 presidential, 1,033 parliamentary and 7,009 civic candidates.

The election was also significant considering the scale of logistical and operational challenges that the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) had to put in place for the polls. We had in our Interim Statement commended the professionalism and commitment of the ECK. As stated in our Interim Statement, we formed the view that up until the conclusion of Election Day, we considered the process credible.

However, since polling day it has become obvious that there is a need to have in place much improved measures to ensure the timely release of election results and the need to considerably improve the system of communication between ECK headquarters and the fields.

The events that unfolded since polling day have eroded the confidence of the people of Kenya. The manner in which the results were announced has raised suspicion and caused widespread mistrust. It is therefore our view that the election process following the closing of the polls fell short of acceptable international standards.

We applaud the people of Kenya for their enthusiasm, determination and resolve to perform their civic responsibility by turning out in large numbers to exercise their constitutional rights. Indeed, we note that this election registered the highest turn out of voters in the country's history with an increase from 57 percent voter turnout in 2002 to some 65 percent in the 2007 elections.

We regret the disturbing incidence of political violence in some parts of the country which resulted in several deaths, and the destruction of property including burning of vehicles. We were saddened to note that,

for the first time in the country's history, more than 100 candidates contested parliamentary seats. We would encourage the Government and political parties to initiate measures aimed at increasing women's participation in the political process, in order to strengthen their representation at all levels.

We were informed that these elections would, to a large extent, be overshadowed by ethnic considerations. Our analysis of election results has corroborated that assertion. We believe that this is a dangerous trend that must be addressed to ensure national cohesion.
End text.

RANNEBERGER